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NSC BRIEFING

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IRAQ

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- I. Indicative of increasing Communist influence over Prime Minister Qasim is a report that Colonel Mahdawi, president of Iraqi military court which convicted ex-premier ~~Jamali~~ ^{YAHYA} as well as pro-Egyptian Colonel Arif, is scheduled to become Minister of Interior.
- A. Mahdawi is either a Communist or very close to being one. He is also brother-in-law of Qasim.
- B. Mahdawi conducted court in brutal and outrageous manner.
- C. Present Interior Minister Yahya has been opposed to leftward drift but is a weak individual.
- D. Communists plan large demonstrations in Mosul this Friday, probably to provoke clashes which could justify crack-down on UAR elements there.
- II. Last Monday, Qasim for the first time publicly replied to Nasir's propaganda attacks on him.
- A. Without mentioning Nasir or the UAR by name, Qasim accused Nasir of withholding full support for the Algerian rebels, or failing to cooperate generally to establish Arab foreign, military, and economic policies, and of subsidizing "mercenary newspapers" to attack Iraq.
- B. Qasim echoed recent Communist propaganda in contrasting the "dictatorship" of Nasir with the rule of "the people" which he claimed exists in Iraq.
- C. Attack on Nasir over Algerian issue hits Nasir in currently vulnerable spot, since relations between Nasir and Algerian leaders have recently deteriorated while Nasir entering deals to sell Egyptian cotton to France.

1. Qasim may have chance to replace Nasir as Arab champion of Algerian rebel cause; if closer relations develop between Baghdad and Algerian rebels, this could also be channel for increased Communist contacts with rebels.

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